

# **Wastewater Operator Certification Program Advisory Committee**

## **Meeting Summary**

### **April 2, 2003**

Attendees included: Todd Carlson, Russ Glaser, Tammie McClure, Doug Miller, Tim Pelton, Janice Sedlak

#### **Welcome & Introductions**

Welcomed:

Janice Sedlak, Manager, Municipal Service Unit

The Wastewater Operator Certification Program has moved from the Technical Services Unit to the Municipal Service Unit.

Reviewed and accepted the agenda and summary for the May 7, 2002 committee meeting.

#### **State Budget**

As everyone is probably well aware, times are tight with the state budget. And, as always, nothing is for sure until the final budget is passed. However, as far as is known right now the Wastewater Operator Certification Program should not be taking any cuts and we should be able to maintain the status quo.

#### **Committee Membership**

The committee has reviewed the resume of Holly Fuller (Group II) and recommends that she be contacted and asked to serve on the committee.

The membership terms of Jill Parker (Group II) and Tim Pelton (Group IV) expired December 2002 and the membership term of Russ Glaser (Group III) ends December 2003. Tammie has asked all three to continue as members of the Advisory Committee and all three have agreed.

The committee membership still needs to fill two openings for Group I operators (one from the Eastern part of the state and one from the Western part of the state). It has been very difficult to find any Group I operators that are able to take the time necessary to participate in the committee meetings. The committee has recommended that if we are unable to recruit any Group I operators that would be able to participate on the committee that we should attempt to get more Group II operators to fill the openings. If that fails then we will need to fill the openings with other interested operators.

Tim has agreed to recruit possible members from East of the mountains and Russ Glaser has agreed to recruit possible members from West of the mountains. Tammie will provide each of them with a list of wastewater treatment facilities in Washington State.

In an attempt to get the word out to wastewater operators about the committee and committee activities, it was recommended that Tammie contact Chris Sheridan (Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association representative) to ask for assistance to get information out to their members; Tammie should put an article in the Operator Update that goes out in October; contact the publisher of the Department of Health's newsletter to see if they would mind including

something; and talk to Gary Bailey about possibly including a brief item in the NPDES Permit cover page of all new permits.

Tammie asked that the committee membership share the responsibility for setting up and preparing for the committee meetings and meeting follow-up. The committee agreed.

### **Professional Growth**

Report:

There are currently 1,870 active operators, of those operators with a professional growth end date of 12-03

- Approximately 1,100 have not yet documented meeting their professional requirement
- 549 operators that have some CEUs documented received a reminder letter and transcript of training.
- Approximately 651 operators that have 0 CEUs documented will be getting a reminder letter the week of April 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Exams**

Report:

February 2003 exam statistics –

Grp OIT/I	44 examinees	82% passed
Grp II	21 examinees	86% passed
Grp III	20 examinees	50% passed
Grp IV	10 examinees	80% passed

Tammie shared information from the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) regarding the new Multiple Entry exam ABC is working on. Currently, ABC exams are meant to be taken sequentially (i.e., an operator should take the Group 1 exam before the II, the II before the III and so on). Many states, including Washington State, do not require that the exam be taken in sequence. This causes many to question whether the exam is successfully measuring the competency of the examinee at a Group II or higher level, if they have not been required to first take the lower level exams. Because of these concerns, ABC has begun developing, what they are calling, Multiple Entry exams. This may mean more questions on each exam. Each exam will probably include a certain number of core questions with the rest of the questions directed at “need to know” items based on the level of the exam being taken. ABC plans to complete development toward the end of this year.

Tammie distributed a copy of the letter written by Jill Parker to ABC suggesting additions to the Formula/Conversion Sheet ABC provides with each of their exams. Jill accompanied the letter to ABC with a copy of the old Ecology Formula/Conversion Sheet and requested ABC considers making some revisions. This letter was put together as a result of operator input that Jill received while working in the field.

### **Program Policies**

As part of the annual program policy review, a copy of the Wastewater Operator Certification Program Policies dated May 2002 was handed out and Tammie asked members to review the policies and get comments, concerns, and/or recommendations regarding possible additions to her by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

The committee again discussed the pros and cons of requiring that one out of the three wastewater professional growth CEUs be specific to wastewater treatment. Tammie handed out recommendations submitted by Shawn Redmond, City of Olympia and Carl Jones, Department of Ecology as well as a copy of a Fact Sheet from the Department of Health providing information on why and how they determine relevancy.

The pros of the new requirement were to better ensure that wastewater operators stay educated with regard to subjects specifically relevant to wastewater treatment. The cons include the logistics of tracking and enforcing compliance of such a requirement. The committee recommended that we start by making this a recommendation and attempt to track how many operators achieve their professional growth requirement without taking any courses in wastewater treatment. Todd and Doug will develop a draft policy/recommendation and distribute it to all committee members via Email by June 1<sup>st</sup> with a plan to finalize by October 2003.

### **Infrastructure Safety**

Tammie had attended the Pacific Northwest Drinking Water & Wastewater Security Workshop sponsored by the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency in Seattle. Tammie reported on the workshop and distributed copies of the report she emailed to Water Quality Program Management. For information about the workshop, we were told the agenda and workshop notes would be posted at [www.waterisac.org](http://www.waterisac.org). ISAC stands for Information Sharing & Analysis System.

### **Roundtable**

Tammie asked the committee members to check out the wastewater operator certification website at [www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wastewater](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wastewater) then click on Wastewater Operator Certification. She would like members to look at it as if they are new to operator certification and want to find out how to become certified. She would also like them to review it for overall user friendliness. Please Email her any comments and/or suggestions you may have.

Tammie feels that there is a need to provide a step by step how to on becoming wastewater certified. She will begin working with the webmaster on that and is open to any other suggestion people might have

### **Next Meeting**

Todd Carlson has agreed to chair the next meeting scheduled for November 12, 2003 in Lacey. The meeting after that is scheduled for April 7, 2004 in Eastern Washington.